



## **Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission August 7, 2018**

**Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, August 7, 6:00 p.m., at the East Valley Veterans Education Center, 3320 South Price Road, Tempe, Arizona.**

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Keith Finkle, Chair  
Troy Friedman, Vice Chair  
Mario Aguirre  
William Blair  
Lauren Hyre  
Michelle Loposky  
Matthew Schmitt  
Laura Skotnicki (telephonically)

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Patricia Little-Upah  
David Lucier  
Stephanie Michael

**City Staff Present:**

Octavia Harris, Human Services Deputy Director  
Parrish Spisz, Council Aide II+

**Guests Present:**

Anne Gill, CEO Tempe Chamber of Commerce  
Brandon Dimoff, ASU Student

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order**

Chair Keith Finkle called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances**

None

**Agenda Item 3 – Commission Updates**

Interim Staff Liaison to the Commission, Parrish Spisz updated members on the following:

1. Nikki Ripley, Communications Manager will be the point-of-contact for any website updates. She will work on updating the commissioners page.
2. The Veterans Commission member composition changes will be on the August 9 Regular Council Agenda as an ordinance text amendment. The changes to membership were proposed by the commission to allow greater flexibility in recruitment of new members.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of June 5, 2018 Minutes – (Motion Required)**

**MOTION:** Commission Member William Blair moved to APPROVE the June 5, 2018 minutes

**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commission Member Lauren Hyre; Motion passed on a 8-0 Vote

**AYES:** Chair Keith Finkle, Vice-Chair Troy Friedman, Commission Members Mario Aguirre, William Blair, Lauren Hyre, Michelle Loposky, Matthew Schmitt, and Laura Skotnicki

**ABSENT:** Commission Members Patricia Little-Upah, David Lucier, Stephanie Michael

#### **Agenda Item 5 – East Valley Veterans Education Center Update**

Vice Chair Friedman reported that the East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC) parking lot is being paved. He also informed the commission that the EVVEC is expanding into downtown Phoenix and in Queen Creek. Now that he's fully staffed at EVVEC he will be spending time in Phoenix to get it operational. The Queen Creek center will be housed in the Rio Salado Community and be staffed by Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW volunteers.)

The EVVEC will become a part of the Veteran Success Center Network 501c3. A \$15 million endowment is being developed to support the regional center network.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Tempe Community Council Impact Award Discussion**

No action. Deadline has passed.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Veteran Supportive Employers Performance Measure**

Parrish Spisz updated the commission that the Veteran Supportive Employer (VSE) performance goal is 30 employers by the end of 2019. Commission Member Aguirre reported that two new companies became certified giving us 10 companies who are now VSE, and that a new Arizona Coalition of Military Families staff member has been hired to focus on recruiting and training new VSE companies. He also suggested that businesses like TriWest who are VSE should be counted towards the Tempe goal since they have a large presence in the city even though they have a regional office in Phoenix. Commission members agreed on this point. He also reported the VSE program expanded to offer a "SkillBridge" feature that allows a business, at no cost, to bring on a veteran employee for 90 days. Qualified employees are active military members who are within 90 days of separating from active duty. The program gives both employee and employer a no-risk experience.

Tempe Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer, Anne Gill, attended the meeting to express the business community's interest in the program. She is enthused about partnering with the Veterans Commission to recruit and train new VSE companies in Tempe. Commission Member Aguirre will connect her with the Arizona Coalition of Military Families. The commission will also be involved. Ideas discussed to promote the program:

- Work through Chamber's Military Advisory Committee
- Chamber marketing
- Informational workshops
- On-site Navigator training

#### **Agenda Item 8 – ASU Salute to Service**

Commission Member Loposky reported that there will be 8,075 military affiliated students at ASU this year. Salute to Service week begins Nov 4 with a women's basketball game against Baylor University at Ft. Defiance on the Navajo Nation. It culminates with a football home game on Nov 10 against UCLA.

#### **Agenda Item 9 – Strategic Plan Review**

No updates. Consider next steps since plan is outdated.

**Agenda Item 10 – Commission Member Discussion**

Chair Keith Finkle announced that he may need to resign his seat before the end of his term in 2020. To ensure continuity of leadership he asked who was interested in assuming the Chair position. Vice Chair Friedman said he was prepared to take the Chair position when needed.

**Agenda Item 11 – Commission Member Announcements**

Commission Member Aguirre asked for volunteers to help the Arizona Coalition of Military Families prepare food packages for the Volunteer Day of Service on September 11. Commission Member Loposky has recently moved to Tempe.

**Agenda Item 12 – Future Agenda Items – September 4, 2018**

- Update on the Arizona Veteran Supportive Employer Program
- EVVEC update
- ASU Salute to Service Update
- EV Veterans Court Update
- Update on TMFR/VA program

**Agenda Item 13 - Adjournment**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.**

Next meeting will be on September 4, 2018

Minutes Prepared by: Parrish Spisz

Reviewed by: Melissa Placencia

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Keith Finkle, Chair  
Tempe Veterans Commission